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Citation for published version:

Jamieson, L 2016, 'Families, relationships and 'environment': (Un)sustainability, climate change and biodiversity loss', *Families, Relationships and Societies*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 335–355.
<https://doi.org/10.1332/204674316X14758387773007>

Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1332/204674316X14758387773007](https://doi.org/10.1332/204674316X14758387773007)

Link:

[Link to publication record in Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)

Document Version:

Peer reviewed version

Published In:

Families, Relationships and Societies

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(Un)sustainability, climate change and biodiversity loss,
Families, Relationships and Societies, vol 5, no 3, 335–55 is available online at:
[10.1332/204674316X14758387773007](https://doi.org/10.1332/204674316X14758387773007)

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FAMILIES, RELATIONSHIPS AND 'ENVIRONMENT': (UN)SUSTAINABILITY, CLIMATE CHANGE & BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Introduction

Few of the many social science researchers writing about personal life are simultaneously addressing the cluster of issues sometimes referred to by the shorthand 'environment' - sustainability, climate change, loss of biodiversity and depletion of natural resources; I hope this will change. One purpose of this article and the special issue is to enable researchers of families and relationships to locate ways in which their expertise can advance understanding of relevance to more sustainable and equitable futures. Another is to encourage more recognition among researchers studying environmental issues of the relevance of existing research on families and relationships. For sustainable development to be a global reality, there must be very significant reduction of high carbon-footprint and resource depleting consumption in the rich regions of the world, here referred to as the Minority Worlds in recognition that this is not how the majority of people live (Punch and Tisdall 2012). A theoretical and empirical case is made for seeing families and personal relationships as multiply engaged in producing or inhibiting the possibilities of a more sustainable and equitable planet. I argue that researchers studying families and relationships, whether within or across national contexts, are well placed to engage their work with policy, practice and activist discussions of the needed shift towards more sustainable practices, pro-environmental dispositions and a collective politics of change.

The conduct of family life and personal relationships has profound consequences for environment and sustainability issues and have sometimes been theorised as likely to be the enemies of social change, and particularly social change giving priority to the common good. Family-sex-gender systems enact the demographic trends, births, deaths, morbidity and migration, governing population size (Therborn 2004). The conduct of family and personal life plays a major role in how demanding the population is on finite resources. David Morgan (2011a) observed that family practices overlap with practices of consumption and Alan Warde¹ noted that consumption is 'a moment in almost every practice' (Warde 2005, 137). It is extremely important to understand quite how significant the contributions of Minority-

¹ Warde defines consumption as 'a process whereby agents engage in appropriation and appreciation, whether for utilitarian, expressive or contemplative purposes, of goods, services, performances, information or ambience, whether purchased or not, over which the agent has some degree of discretion.' (2005, 137)

World family households and personal relationships are to carbon footprints through domestic, leisure and relationship-related consumption. Domestic households are major consumers through the stuff of their home, their car(s), their holidays and their everyday domestic and leisure practices. In the UK, households consume 59% of national consumption of natural gas (gas being the dominant fuel used for heating), 30% of electricity, more than half of energy used in transport (DECC 2015, 107 and 126) and are responsible for about half of national food waste (House of Lords 2014). But it is equally important to recognise the many other aspects of the conduct of family and personal life that have relevance to 'environment' issues. These include practices facilitating greater openness to or more blinkered boundaries around responsibilities to others, orientations to species other than humans, engagement with or disregard for elements of 'the outdoors' and the 'natural world', propensity to civic engagement and political activism, degrees of conscious future orientation, foresight and willingness to plan, capacities for utopian imagining – all have bearing on environmentally-consequential yet taken-for-granted practices, as well as propensity to consciously support, politically agitate for or take environmental action (concern for future generations, concern for environmental injustices, climate impact injustices etc.).

Variations on the idea that commitments to family life and family members are in tension with working for 'community' stalk the literature. They range from the assertion that emotional absorption in personal life pre-empts political or civic energy to more complex analysis of ways in which the organisation of personal relationships perpetuates social harms. The latter approach informed the feminist account of the 'anti-social family' (Barret and McIntosh 1982) but feminists have also long acknowledged personal relationships as a site of potential transformation. Attention needs to focus now on circumstances enabling families and personal relationships to be part of the solution to 'environment' issues, rather than part of the problem.

Personal Relationships and Social Change

In part, the relevance of research on families and relationships to concerns about 'environment' rests on the theoretical claim that families and personal relationships effect macro social change, that is, they play their part in world making. This is both sometimes forgotten and an unremarkable view that is consistent with major traditions of social theory – phenomenology (Schutz 1932), symbolic interactionism (Mead 1934, Berger and Luckman 1967), sociologically informed adaptations of psychoanalytic approaches (Scheff 1990), and more or less feminist informed blends of Marxism with these traditions (Bourdieu 1977, Elias 1991, Giddens 1984, Smith 1987). Instead of remembering that agency, the capacity for action, is anchored in the emotionally-charged intimacy of embodied personal relationships, and that the direction and organisation of much of social life is enmeshed with and draws energy and direction from such personal relationships, theoretical attention is selectively on overarching abstract systems and structures or diffuse disembodied discourse. There are many attempts at theorising the enmeshing of structure, discourse and agency. Giddens's theory of 'structuration' deployed the concept of 'practice' to express the mutual

dependence of macro social structures and personal agency: 'the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize. Structure is not 'external' to individuals: as memory traces, and as instantiated in social practices, it is in a certain sense more 'internal' than exterior to their activities' (Giddens, 1984, p25). Some more recent attempts at erasing the illusion of mutually independent individuals and systems (whether material structures or patterns of discourse) again risk underplaying the significance of familial and intimate relationships. By denying any sense that entities or individuals exist prior to co-construction through their interrelations, the pervasiveness of the impact of families and relationships on momentum for (or against) social change is lost in the unrecognised biographical baggage brought to the moment as gut feelings, dispositions and capacities for collective action.

Over the last decade, 'practices' has become a dominant concept in the UK study of families, intimate relationships and personal life, pioneered by David Morgan (2011a, 2011b, 2004, 1999). A focus on 'family practices' looks beyond normative and state-sanctioned institutionalised systems of 'the family' to the detail of processes, how people embody, display, articulate and enact doing and being family. The idea of 'family practices' as the foci of research has been generalised to parenting practices, friendship practices and practices of intimacy, the multi-stranded relational work of making and sustaining close personal ties. These relational practices are also understood as possible sites of creative reworking with the potential to impact back on the wider cultural discourses and structural constraints that frame the opportunities of their doing. More focused attention is now needed on how family and intimate practices intersect with how people take up, sustain, rework or challenge environmentally consequential dispositions, actions, discourses and systems.

Some theorists of the social shaping of technology, consumption and 'environment' (Halkier et al 2011, Reckwitz 2002, Schatzki 2001, Warde 2005, Southerton 2009, 2011) have become concerned with identifying the key elements of a practice: 'a routinised type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge' (Reckwitz 2002, 249). Elizabeth Shove and her colleagues further strip down the definition of a practice to durable arrangements and performances involving linkage and integration of three key elements: materials, competences and meanings (Shove et al, 2012). These labels are a shorthand and, like all shorthand, risk losing as well as retaining the more they stand in for. Meanings, for example, must stand in for associated emotions, feelings, values, as well as ideas, imaginings, memories, aspirations and other forms of embodied legacies and future orientations. Shove and colleagues demonstrate how breaking down a clearly delimited practical activity, like driving or showering, into these elements, advances understanding of the take-up and maintenance of a practice. Family and relational practices involve a much wider repertoire of activities, and there are less obvious gains from seeking to reduce each strand of this repertoire to materials, competences and meanings. A richer, more complex understanding of family practice adds to the analysis of an environmentally-consequential activity that is integrated into family practices, as driving is for many families.

Shove and colleagues acknowledge the importance of the 'density and character of social bonds' (Shove et al 2012, 160) for the transmission of practices. The relational practices sustaining social bonds are a key focus of literatures on families and relationship (e.g. Smart 2007, Coltrane and Adams 2008, Cherlin 2009, Jamieson 2011, Lareau 2011, Morgan 2011, Heaphy et al 2013, Gabb and Fink 2015, Risman 2015, Roseneil and Ketokivi 2015). There is a substantial body of research that documents the variety of ways in which people are embedded in networks and communities (e.g. Allan 2008, Hansen 2005, Jamieson et al 2006, Spencer and Pahl 2006, Widmer 2006), from childhood (Corsaro 2003, O'Connor et al 2004, Morrow 2004) to older age (for example Phillipson et al 2004 de Jong 2003, Wenger et al 2000, 2007). This literature shows the suffusion of friendship and family relationships and the continued profound significance of both for capacities to act in the world. Understanding how people are embedded in 'personal communities', including variation by age, gender, life-stage, cultural ethnicity and socio-economic circumstance, can only enhance understanding how environmentally consequential practices are, in the language of Shove and co-authors, encountered, adopted, reproduced, travel and their potential for change.

The significance of families and personal relationships as creative sites of practice is re-marginalised if their role is shrunk to providing the competences and meanings to support given 'materials'. Some discussion in technology studies can be read as if the 'materials' element of practice is always more consequential than the culturally shaped intangible 'competences' and 'meanings' although this is not the reading intended by Shove and colleagues (2012, 23). In much discussed examples of high consumption domestic practices, the daily use of the electric shower and the household car, a historical trajectory is traced in which material infrastructures reached a point of development that provide their own resistance to change. One way of reading this story is that the meanings and competences of cleanliness and mobility that are constructed in families responded to the electric shower and the car and became a key part of how the shower and car were adopted. However, once electric showers are plumbed into the fabric of every home and the materiality and geography of transport systems, housing and workplaces are organised around the car, 'materials' lock people into high consumption much more powerfully than the meanings and competences of cleanliness and mobility (Shove 2003, Dennis and Urry 2009). The emphasis on materials begins to subvert an understanding of a practice as dialectic, recreating the division between external structure and internal agency that the concept is supposed to bridge. Too linear a story also underplays diversity, allowing the extent of enmeshing of family practices and driving or showering to render the range of exceptions invisible.

In imagining a society that responds appropriately to the challenge of climate change, John Urry's appeal, 'It is not individuals who have to change but social-and-physical systems' (2011, 156), makes no mention of families or personal relationships. Yet families are social and physical systems created by family practices. Contemporary theorists complement the focus on family practices with more inclusive language than 'the family' such as 'family configurations' (Widmer 2006) or 'personal communities' (Spencer and Pahl 2006). This language recognises that the systems of informal care that people co-construct in sustain

themselves are often more than biological and legal family entities or the co-residential others of family households. These looser 'families' are, nevertheless, also social and physical systems. Unlike their depiction in now unfashionable functionalist account, families and informal networks of care are not separated off from wider social worlds as they perform their functions of creating and sustaining 'individuals', nor are they mere servants of the powerful carbon-military-industrial complex or capitalist systems. For example, personal life is encroached on by commercialisation (Bauman 2003, Hochschild 2012) but not typically dictated or destroyed by it; most family lives are not hollowed out by hyper-consumption, a 'work to spend' cycle (Schor 2010), that poisons all other logics. Moralities of care often remain steadfast and routinely expressed through parenting, couple, filial and friendship practices, most enduring mothers' care for children, even in highly constraining socio-economic contexts (Crow 2002, Dreby 2010, Kochuyt 2004, Ribbens McCarthy et al 2003, Parreñas, 2005). Variations on the theme of 'money can't buy you love' coexist with the routine combination of money and love in family life (Zelizer 2005, Pugh 2009); for example, research in Europe, North America, Mexico and the Philippines documents children distinguishing between parent-child gifts as expressions of love and care and as failed substitutes for lack of love and care (Dreby 2010, Haugen 2005, Jamieson and Milne 2012, Parreñas, 2014). Consumption in families and for families 'constitutes care, connection and belonging' (Lindsay and Maher, 2013, 1). The institutionalisation of caring for and caring about others within 'family' systems is not only imbricated with practices of consumption consequential for the environment but also frames support for biodiversity and room for manoeuvre towards the environmental and intergenerational justice advocated by those seeking a more radical response to climate change.

Relational Practices and Practices of Consumption

Sustaining awareness of how significant the environmental impact of family and relational practices can be, might assist scholars to further stretch their interest in advancing understandings of families and relationships to encompass environmental issues. Not all everyday and 'high days and holidays' practices of families and relationships release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere or deplete finite resources, but many do, including the 'family shop', 'family car', the 'family drive', 'the family home', 'family holidays', 'family Christmas', 'the family meal', 'the family pet' and many of the gifts and purchased services used to demonstrate being a good family member or friend, to distinguish 'us' as a couple/friend/family, or to stage a romance (Cheal 1987, 1988, Miller 1998, 2010, Pugh 2009, Southerton 2011). Levels of environmentally damaging consumption typically track levels of affluence; the environmental consequences might be called 'inadvertent' as rich family households do not typically seek to despoil nor poor to conserve. Inglehart and colleagues' attempts at measuring patterns of values across the globe and over time led to the expectation of higher environmental consciousness among the more affluent whose 'post materialist values' are not dominated by worry about necessities (Inglehart 2015). However, the picture revealed by detailed studies of environmentally conscious behaviours (water and energy use, transport practices, recycling, purchasing fair trade and organic products) finds both inconsistent practices and examples contradicting this expectation (Barr 2008, Barr et al 2011, Waitt et al 2012).

There are growing bodies of research on practices of production and consumption or 'prosumption' with the potential for delivering more sustainable lives; the social change potential for such developments might be unpacked further by more detailed scrutiny of the intermeshing of relational and consumption or 'prosumption' practices. Some of the literature is already going in this direction albeit without the benefit of building on existing research on personal life. For example, research on urban vegetable gardening as a community self-provisioning practice that potentially displaces higher carbon foods, speaks of nurturing community, sustaining knowledge and consciousness of ecological issues and equipping people for pro-environmental action (Barthel et al 2013, Degen et al 2006). Growing attention is also being paid to the relational aspects of forms of socially organizing housing that potentially reduce carbon-footprints through shared resources (Bruun 2011, Jarvis 2011, Sargisson 2012, Seyfang 2010). Historical and biographical turning points in the direction of change have also been given attention (Nicol 2015, Shirani et al 2013, Venn et al 2015), and are potentially fruitful foci of research illuminating conditions inhibiting or facilitating the redirection of intermeshed relational and consumption practices deserving of further research.

Two environmentally consequential enmeshed family and consumption practices that have received considerable research attention are car driving and the production, organisation and performance of the family meal. These are both emotionally invested practices integrated into everyday routines of organising family life and relationships, expressing 'doing family' and being a good parent, cross-cut by social divisions such as social class, gender and ethnicity. A family-car history runs alongside the integration of the car into masculine heterosexualised youth culture (Redshaw 2008, Sachs 1992, Carrabine and Longhurst 2002, Gilroy 2002). This family history is of a paradox between the safe-haven idyll of the suburban, family home, often only realised by better-off families, and the associated car-traffic flows that multiply pedestrian hazards and child-asthma inducing pollution, particularly for poorer households with no car. For car-owning parenting households, the intersections of family practices and cars are multiple as cars offer mobile domestic familial spaces, sites for negotiating distinctions of gender and generation, a means to demonstrate good parenthood by keeping vulnerable family members safe and framing children's and young adults' sense of their own capacity for mobility (Baker 2008, Best 2006, Laurier et al 2008, Sheller 2004). For young adults, driving is an aspect of a family-sponsored transition to adulthood, that not all parents can afford (Baker 2014). The 'family meal' is a longer-standing icon of family life, good parenthood and particularly good motherhood (Charles and Kerr 1988, Murcott 1998, Jackson 2009, Kaufman 2010). It has captured the attention of environmental activists because of the growing use of high-carbon-food (production, processing, packaging and transport) and the high-carbon cost of food waste (Evans 2014, Evans et al 2012, Porpino et al 2015, Secondi 2014). Research documenting struggles over 'healthy'² family meals are indicative of how the enmeshed practices work against lower-carbon diets. Mothers continue to carry the primary responsibility for food production and their concessions to children's choice of heavily

² The slogan 'five a day' was an aspect of a UK government sponsored healthy-eating campaign advocating five proportions of fruit and vegetables a day; a message environmentalists fear contributes to consumption of out-of-local-season, high-air-mile fruit and vegetables.

marketed high-carbon 'fast foods' have to be understood in the context of not only time and financial pressures but the importance of harmony at family meals (O'Connell and Brannen 2013). Research documents class differences with working-class mothers more readily giving in when teenagers refused to eat fruit and vegetables than middle-class mothers, in part because can less afford waste but also because of other serious challenges which make food choices and eating practices low in the 'hierarchy of worries' (Backett-Milburn et al. 2011). These two examples are sufficient to illustrate the cross cutting of enmeshed practices with the social divisions that frame and are reproduced in family and personal life in ways that are not reducible to the story of consumption practices or simple stories of economic necessity versus 'postmaterial values'.

Existing literatures take an interest in the intergenerational transmission of practices of consumption but what this means in terms of the intermeshing of intergenerational relationships and consumption is often sketchy. Research suggests that an 'inadvertent' environmentalism (Hitchings et al 2015), low-carbon life-styles and pro-environmental activities without a conscious intention of environmental protection, may be as likely to be 'transmitted' as consciously political, environmental values. Moreover, practices may stick even when economic conditions of necessity that first produced them cease to exist. However, the literature also suggests that a deliberate practice of 'thrift' in order to preserve household economic resources has less radical potential in terms of social change than a value-laden practice of 'frugality' that consciously seeks to preserve the environment (Evans, 2011). These themes are explored in the renewed interest in the role of families in the shift from the 'make and mend' generation who were parenting in the austerity of the war years (Nicol 2015) to the consumption practices of those born in subsequent decades. This historical interest is combined with a focus on a point of biographical change in the work of Susan Venn and colleagues (Venn et al 2015) who studied post-World-War2 'baby boomers' at their transition to retirement. This cohort has been stereotyped as the first throw-away consumption-junkie generation but the authors found that their everyday shopping remained framed by the thrift or frugality of their parents' generation. More self-indulgent high-carbon high-cost consumption, such as world travel or the new car, was also on some retirees' agendas but so too was more time on gardening and cooking, plus a concern to avoid spending that wiped out money for the grandchildren. When noting that their respondents characterised subsequent generations as more profligate than themselves, Venn and colleagues don't explore if they saw their own parenting as implicated by not passing on provisioning skills such as cooking from scratch, growing food or making and mending. The authors conclude that the practices of their interviewees were an inadvertent form of environmentalism with the balance more towards thrift than frugality; what this means in terms of 'transmission' to subsequent generations was beyond their focus but is of obvious interest.

The literature on families and relationships shows that the experience of low-consumption in disadvantaged family-households often involves being painfully aware of its 'inadvertent' character and managing stigma rather than being able to claim environmental credentials. The American study of Alison Pugh (2009) is a much cited example echoed by British studies. Pugh documented how children in poor families censor the financial demands they make of

their parents and develop strategies for concealing deprivation from their peers. Sonja Livingstone has applied Pugh's description of social class differences in parents' patterns of buying smart phones, computers and internet enabled devices on behalf of their children. She notes that equipment purchases might be a 'symbolic indulgence' for a working-class parent, while refusal to buy might be a 'symbolic deprivation' for a middle-class parent, in both cases signalling their intention to act in the child's best interest. Researchers could take up such issues more attuned to environmental impact and environmental justice, for example, seeking circumstances of material and discursive resources that enable the enmeshing of low carbon consumption and relational practices without such stigma.

Families, Relationships and Biodiversity

In a context of human-induced radically disappearing biodiversity (eg. Burns et al 2013 showing 60% of all species in serious decline and hundreds at threat of extinction in the UK), there is very good reason to take interest in the detail of family practices within 'the countryside' or 'wilderness' and urban green spaces. The inability to name wild plants, birds or other creatures enables loss of biodiversity to pass literally unremarked. There is very little systematic research that explores family and friendship discourse naming species or engaging with human-induced species loss. Research suggests that, when parents or other family members communicate appreciative interest in the natural world to children, this both enhances their well-being and impacts on children's awareness of environmental issues, influencing future willingness to take pro-environmental action; similarly, children who are engaged by aspects of the natural world can enhance the engagement of receptive parents (Chawla 2007 2009, Faber Taylor 2006, Gill 2006, Grønhøj, and Thøgersen 2009, Payne 2010, 2005, Myers et al 2012). Sense of stewardship for the natural world and willingness to act in defence of non-human species may also be influenced by familial experiences with non-human companion animals, domestic and family pets. This remains under explored in the growing literature (e.g. Charles and Carter 2011, Tipper 2011, Walsh 2009), as are other environment issues, such as the carbon-footprint of pet food and the pet industry.

The importance of family practices and childhood relationships to environmentalism and pro-environmental practices on behalf of non-human species, are illustrated by a growing bodies of research including work that explores the biographies of adult environmentalists (eg. Chawla 2007 2009, Ewert et al 2005, Hards 2011a &b). Sarah Hards's PhD study (2011a) of UK climate change activists, notes the importance of a 'conductive upbringing'. Hards draws on both Bourdieu and the notion of 'path dependency' to convey the formation of unconscious embodied predispositions, as well as the channelling of routes travelled and more explicit handing on of activist know-how. She also writes about how family backgrounds can 'normalise' relatively unusual behaviour (Hards 2011a, 2011b). Studies of vegetarianism also provide examples of how family practices of childhood can be more or less conducive. In most politicised forms, vegetarianism, and particularly veganism, is associated with a politics of food that values biodiversity, organic farming and substituting

low-carbon vegetables for high-carbon meat but not all vegetarianism involves such a politics or any form of solidarity with non-human animals (Boyle 2011, Beardsworth and Keele 1992). In some cases of vegetarianism as an inadvertent form of pro-environmental action, people use their family and friends to excuse their vegetarianism to non-vegetarians, distancing the decision to become vegetarian from themselves. This is a different form of 'normalising', denying a political project of vegetarianism, forestalling challenge or perhaps addressing the possibility that others may feel judged for meat or dairy eating (Boyle 2011). This is suggestive of a range of further research projects such as when and how family households or households-of-friends embrace vegetarianism as a collective project versus partitioning off a solo vegetarian. This is one of a number of scenarios that might illuminate circumstances encouraging or inhibiting diffusion of 'inadvertent' low carbon or pro-non-human-species practices and the additional contextual supports required for more politically conscious action. A research programme covering a range of different circumstances of intersection of family practices, pro-environmental action, and wider discourses of consumption, biodiversity and environmentalism is required to tease out the conditions in which pro-environmental behaviour or support for biodiversity is normalised but apolitical, worn as a politicised badge of honour or played down and kept on the margins.

Family and friendship practices that involve conflict over pro-environmental action can be productive of social change, while cooperation and collusion can block social change; both are worthy of more research attention. Literature discussing environmentally-important practices are littered with examples of potentially consequential family tensions, such as a mother explaining how her daughter's persistent refusal to eat meat converted her to vegetarianism (Beardsworth and Keele 1992, 268) and a mother's neutralising of her cyclist daughter's accusative assertion that 'car driving is the new smoking' (Green et al, 2012, 278). Several studies describe activist careers having phases of being derailed by stages in families and relationships, including adopting conventional environmentally-damaging consumption patterns in order to honour caring and providing without causing others the deprivations of a chosen frugality (Hards 2011, Norgaard 2006). Kari Norgaard's (Norgaard 2011, 2006a, 2006b) Norwegian study documents collective collusion in denial of responsibility for climate change. The site of the study, a ski-resort that suffered a season of no snow, is a place where residents have reason to consider climate change and where most enjoy, care about and depend on their natural world. Everyday conversations with friends and family contain a repertoire of silence and discursively downplaying personal and Norwegian governmental responsibility, such as the idea that, since Norway is a small country, local sins are irrelevant in the context of the much larger sins of the United States of America. This work is suggestive of how personal relationships play their part in the lack of political agitation on behalf of the environment or biodiversity but a more systematic programme of such work is required attending to the interaction between the backdrop of national political discourses and everyday family and friendship discursive and material practices.

Environmental and Intergenerational Justice

Environmental campaigners refer to environmental justice as a situation in which the costs and harms of climate change are carried in proportion to contributions to its cause, highlighting that the opposite is typically the case, with richer peoples and countries disproportionately causing and poorer disproportionately suffering harms.

‘Intergenerational justice’ is often referred to along with ‘environmental justice’, using the definition of sustainable development adopted by the World Commission on Environment and Development in the ‘Brundtland report’: *‘Development that meets the needs of current generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’*. A different set of concerns about justice between generations have been given attention by scholars of families and relationships (e.g. Tapper 2013, Higgs and Gilleard 2010). The main focus in studies of intergenerational relationships is on the quality of the relationships and nature of intergenerational solidarity without attending to environmental issues. Nevertheless, there are discussions exploring sense of moral responsibility towards and common cause with more or less geographically and socially distant others versus willingness to ‘other’ others as less worthy of consideration and respect; discussions of relevance to environmental and intergenerational justice requiring empathy with socially, geographically and temporarily distant others.

Intergenerational justice requires acknowledgment of responsibility to future generations. Research on future orientation and imagining is limited and fragmented in the field of families and relationships. Fertility intentions has been a particular interest within demography. Researchers have also explored parents’ aspirations for children but only very recently with any attention to ‘environment’. In a small qualitative UK study involving 47 parents Shirani and co-authors (2013) consider whether parenting and the temporal extension of the self through caring for a younger generation modifies attention to the future and influence views and practices around energy use in both the present and anticipated future. They found that parents of primary children were the most likely to consider life-style changes for the future of their children. And conclude that ‘difficulties lay not in making ethical links to future generations or in the creation of empathy, but in maintaining those links in the context of everyday pressures and other competing moral responsibilities’ (Shirani et al. 2013, p25). Youth and family studies have researched the way in which future orientations or a sense of ‘extended present’ plays out in transitions to adulthood and family transitions but again only rarely with a focus on whether and how issues of ‘environment’ are an aspect of futures. For example, an Australia study concludes that the emphasis placed by parent and teacher ‘experts’ in young people’s lives on individual life-plans and the backdrop of neo-liberal discourse delegitimise political action in response to large scale social issues such as climate change. (Threadgold 2011). This is a broad brush focus-group study with little opportunity for detail or to identify variation, for example, the small minority proportion brought up by activists who may have contested such discourses. It is widely understood that family background influences future orientations and aspirations but research is now required exploring the intersections of family practices and orientations to intergenerational justice.

The research about care and morality in personal life is not fully keyed into its relevance to the catastrophes of climate change and issues of environmental and intergenerational

justice. There are developed literatures on ideals of moral responsibility for and normative obligations to care within families (Finch and Mason 1993, Ganong 1999, Crow 2002, Ribbens McCarthy et al 2003, Risman 2015) relational rules of fairness (Risman and Johnson-Summerford 1998, Jensen et al 2013, Philip 2013, Van Hoof 2013, Gabb and Fink 2015, Sullivan 2015), the drawing of boundaries of intimacy and responsibility (Allan 2005, Jamieson 2005, Castrén and Widmer 2015), the reconfiguration of moral responsibility as couples dissolve and re-partner (Allan et al 2011, Lewis 2001, Smart et al 2001, Smart 2006, Wade and Smart 2002, Ribbens McCarthy et al 2003) and the future of moral responsibilities for elder care in a mobile and ageing world (Baldassar and Merla 2013, Parreñas 2014, particularly anxiously investigated in Asia, e.g. Ikels 2004, Hansen and Svarverud 2010, Quah 2008). These literatures do not ask whether the practices they document model the kinds of moral responsibility and solidarity required to imagine and enact environmental and intergenerational justice. The dominant picture is of care more often honoured than abandoned inflected by differences of gender and socio-economic class. Variations in the way boundaries are drawn and reworked may be suggestive of factors modifying the elasticity of care that are relevant when considering how senses of responsibility might be stretched to encompass intergenerational and environmental justice. The differential willingness to reshape family boundaries found in the step family literature echoes social class differences found in literature on parenting. Annette Lareau (2011) in the USA, and of Valerie Gillies in Britain (2005, 2007) find working-class parents encouraging their children to 'fit in' and be team players with those around them while middle-class parents cultivate a sense of individual entitlement which does not prioritise being flexible in the face of other people's needs. Few studies have more explicitly focused on the extent to which the values communicated in families signal responsibility to distant others beyond 'nearest and dearest'. The main exceptions is the work of Vern Bengtson (2013, Bengtson et al 2002) on the transmission of humanitarian and collective values and the intergenerational work of Julia Brannen (Brannen et al 2004, 2006, 2015) but much more work is required directly focusing on values relevant to intergenerational and environmental justice.

Perhaps a new future imaginary personal life is required to energise challenging the harms of unsustainable life styles and achieving intergenerational, environmental justice. The concept 'amoral familism' entered academic discourse as an imagined extreme of how families draw exclusionary boundaries of morality and responsibility. 'Amoral familism', as developed by the political scientist Edward Banfield (1958), is a still-cited conceptualisation of an antisocial family, despite the particularity of the location in Southern Italy for which it was claimed, and questions about Banfield's evidence and analysis (e.g. Miller 1974). It is recently cited, for example, in questioning whether or not British middle-class parents who send their children to comprehensive schools are seeking to bridge social class divisions and bring up children resisting social class 'othering' (Reay 2014). An alternative vision of moral inclusion, seeking justice for all, is conjured up by 'world families' in the writing of Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (2014). 'World families' re-labels what the wider literature calls 'transnational families' (family relationships that span national boundaries) and 'mixed relationships' (across ethnic, national and religious boundaries) coupled with the declaration that this is a new cultural form with the potential to be transformative. This parallels Beck's depiction of climate change as a moment of opportunity for radical transformation through the 'cosmopolitan imperative'. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim suggest cross-national empathy and harmony fostered by 'the experience of global

interdependencies and active interaction across borders' (Beck 2010, 170). If 'world families' were carriers of the type of cosmopolitanism the authors envisage, then they would be attuned to both environmental and intergeneration justice, and willing to generate solidarities that dissolve borders and boundaries. As the authors acknowledged, the evidence is not (yet) in their favour. The literatures on global care-chains, mail order brides, international adoption and surrogacy, sex tourism and trafficking are rich in examples of families and relationships that exploit rather than subvert the inequalities created by national boundaries (see for example, Altman 2001, Hochschild 2003). Nor does the research on mixed relationships always find spaces of cultural transformation alongside the necessity of skills in dealing with racism and barriers to social acceptance (Caballero et al 2012, Edwards et al 2011, Song 2010, Twine 2010). Nevertheless, there is value in the aspirational and inspirational themes of Beck's work that may encourage a more empirically grounded consideration of the combination of family practices, structural and discursive conditions. Boddy et al (this volume) have compared the orientation to moralities around 'environment' issues among middle-class informant in Majority and Minority world contexts. Researchers are yet to explore whether possibilities of change are suggested for those whose families and relationships bridge Minority and Majority worlds in ways that provide witness to differential impacts of climate change potentially foregrounding issues of environmental and intergenerational justice. Do such 'world families' help to put flesh on the bones of this particular imaginary?

Concluding Remarks

Emotionally charged personal relationships are not peripheral to issues of 'environment' but multiply implicated in both the problems of unsustainable, environmentally-damaging practices and the potential solutions. A brief theoretical section, 'Personal Relationships and Social Change', reminded the reader of mainstream traditions acknowledging families and personal relationships as integral to 'world making', effecting macro social change, castigating neglect of this insight in recent theorising. This section also notes the usefulness of, variations in and limitations of uses of the concept of 'practice'. Subsequent sections have itemised some of the many possibilities of using research on family and relationship practices to enrich the evidence base relevant to understanding routes towards a more sustainable and equitable planet. In doing so, some of the existing literature is reviewed and gaps, and sometimes chasms are identified. It is argued that a more detailed understanding of the intersections of familial or intimate relational practices with environmentally-consequential practices is needed to illuminate possibilities of social change.

Engagement beyond the academic world with activist organisations and agents seeking social change ensures a level of awareness of current strategies for tackling environmental issues that will help to inform socially relevant research. Many researchers of families and relationships already liaise with policy makers and practitioners with an interest in family life and have starting points for extending these contacts to those concerned with issues of climate change, sustainability, loss of biodiversity and environmental degradation. There are many international, national and local forms of activism and organisation that are potential collaborators in thinking through socially relevant research. In the UK, the latter includes

many diverse initiatives at neighbourhood level seeking to encourage more sustainable lives. Examples include projects focusing on: community, organic and heritage gardening, locally-produced and redistributed foods, car clubs, co-housing projects, swap shops, and up-cycling. Such projects are cited as potential sources of insight and collaboration rather than necessarily a focus of research. However, note that when such projects are studied, it is often within the genre of social movements and collective action without also exploring how individuals are embedded in consequential emotionally charged personal relationships, missing the potential value of a focus on the intersections of relational and environmentally consequential practices.

Three topic areas have been used to illustrate the possibilities of exploring environmentally consequential family and relational practices— consumption practices, practices relevant to biodiversity and practices relevant to environmental and intergenerational justice. In each of these topic areas, there is currently insufficient cross-fertilisation between family and relationship literatures and literatures whose explicit focus is ‘environment’. Consumption practices are more extensively researched, albeit that the intersection between familial or relational practices and consumption practices is often under-developed. Researchers of families and relationships can extend the relevance of their work by greater familiarity with research in consumption studies and in science and technology studies that already explicitly orients to issues of ‘environment’ and vice versa. In contrast, there is a much less coherent body of research on family and relational practices consequential for biodiversity. This is despite growing relevant sub-literatures, including studies of the biographies of environmental activists, uses of green space, gardening, human-animal relationships and orientations to the natural world. While there was not space for a proper review of these literatures, studies are typically either inadequately integrated with research on families and relationships or pay little attention to environmental issues and lack the ambition of seeking to create a coherent body of knowledge. With respect to the topics of environmental and intergenerational justice, there are rich seams of relevant research within the field of families and relationships but these remain orthogonal because of the absence of sufficient sensitivity to environmental issues.

Throughout the substantive sections of the paper, suggestions have been made about needed new research. In some cases, modest additions to a topic guide of an existing project would have been sufficient to achieve a to transform existing contributions by adding a more direct focus on ‘environment’. However, many gaps require studies that have not yet been conceived and will require a mix of design strategies and methods of data collection. Reference has been made to research strategies known to illuminate underlying processes that are often otherwise difficult to see, including focusing on points of conflict, historical rupture and biographical transition. Reference has also been made to strategic use of comparison across socio-economic contexts and other social divisions to help identify facilitating and inhibiting structural and discursive conditions of pro-environmental action and dynamics of ‘inadvertent’ and politically conscious social change. Similarly, international comparative projects and projects reading across national contexts enable a clearer identification of how national discourses and governmental structures frame local and familial discourses and opportunities. The selective use of case studies of exceptions,

potential trend setters or vanguards, who are doing things differently has also been noted. These are all tried and tested elements of research design that could and should be deployed much more vigorously to develop a socially relevant programme of research on families, relationships and 'environment'. The six papers that follow are an excellent beginning that will hopefully be followed by many more such contributions to this journal and others.

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